

The MESSENGER

of
OUR
LADY
of
AFRICA



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CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA (White Sisters)

ORIGIN AND AIM: The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa was founded in 1869 by Cardinal Lavigerie, to rescue, moralize and regenerate the pagan and Mohammedan woman, and through her attain the family and society. Exclusively vowed to the Apostolate in Africa, the Sisters devote their lives to the natives in every work of mercy and charity . . . Catechetical, Medical, Educational.

GOVERNMENT AND APPROBATION:

The Congregation is governed by a Superior General who depends directly on the Holy See. The Constitutions were definitely approved by decree the 14th of December 1909 and promulgated on the 3rd of January 1910.

SPIRIT: The Spirit of the Congregation is one of obedience, humility, simplicity, and zeal; and the life of the Sisters one of poverty, mortification and labor.

* * * *

The Congregation numbers over 1,500 Professed Sisters who are devoting their lives to the Natives in 120 Missions, that spread out through—

North Africa: Algeria, Tunisia, Atlas Mountains, Sahara.

West Africa: The Gold Coast, French West Africa.

East Africa: Kenya, Nyassaland, Tanganyika, Uganda, Rhodesia, Belgian Congo, Rwanda, Urundi.

* * * *

OUR AMERICAN HOME IS AT:

White Sisters Convent
319 Middlesex Avenue
Metuchen, New Jersey

THE MESSENGER OF

OUR LADY OF AFRICA

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SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES

Three Masses are said monthly for the living and deceased benefactors of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. Moreover, they share in the prayers and apostolic labors of over fifteen hundred White Sisters, who are working in the African Missions; and in the prayers and acts of self denial that the Natives, so willingly, offer up daily for their benefactors.

TO AVOID THE MISSIONS UNNECESSARY EXPENSE,

kindly notify us immediately of a change of address. If you do not, the postal authorities will tax us for their notification.

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They left June 13th. God speed them onward.

On Their Way to Africa

ELEVEN WHITE SISTERS have sailed during June from the United States for our Motherhouse in North Africa. From there they shall receive definite assignments "to fill the places made vacant by those who have fallen on the field of duty during these trying war years," — quoting Reverend Mother Claude-Marie, our Superior General.

The N.C.W.C. Bureau of Immigration has solved the difficulty of securing the multitudinous papers necessary to travel in war time. It has meant several months of arduous work. All credit to these Perseverant Workers for conquering the unsurpassable handicaps to travel at present.

Two of the eleven Sisters belonged to the Metuchen Community: Sister Mary of Protection had spent two years here to

complete and perfect her English studies, in view of future mission work in British Africa. Sister M. Irena, from Worcester, Mass., came here last fall to prepare her departure. Sister was no newcomer having received her first religious training here some years back. It was with joy that we now saw her on the way to Africa—the legitimately ambited field of labor of all Missionary Sisters. The other Sisters arrived here several weeks ago, while final arrangements for sailing were being completed.

On the 28th of June a cable was received from Lisbon telling of the Sisters' safe arrival there, and that on the very day they had their reservations aboard a plane bound for North Africa. All prayerful wishes to them in their future mission work.

"May God in His goodness keep in you a spirit of generous joy. May He give you the strength to sacrifice everything even yourselves, for the salvation of those unfortunate souls to whom He sends you."

—Cardinal Lavignerie to his missionaries.

The Virgin Who Weeps and Who Smiles



BETWEEN THE SANDS of Mauritania and the great brush of the Sudan, to the north west of Kayes, the Senegal River waters the fertile and picturesque oasis-country of the Kassonkes.

Before being swept into the Felloux rapids, the river slowly and majestically encircles the beautiful island of Sabou-sire. Below Dinguira, the water tinged with purple seems to die in the shadows of the mangos.

A short distance from the brush, where the grotesque baobab reigns as sovereign, the villages of the Kassonkes are found hidden in the foliage of the tamarinds and the jujube trees. The palms of the date trees, with their magnificent high tops of green spreading branches, seem to rest over the scene as a crown.

The villages are indeed gracious and extend to all a hearty welcome. We see the cabins solidly perched on top of piles to keep them safe from water and termites. In front, a porch elevated a few steps marks the entrance. The inhabitants are simple and cordial in their hospitality.

Our Creator is not miserly with His gifts

but He loves to be particularly generous with those privileged places where He has chosen to manifest Himself in some extraordinary way. So also the Blessed Virgin favors to smile with greater kindness upon some special spot. As the valley of the Gave, so also the river of Senegal and the cabins of Kakoulou by the mountains of Dinguira seemed destined to please her.

In singing the praises of the Blessed Virgin it seems appropriate to reveal a little of the mysterious predilection of the Queen of Africa for this humble country in the Dark Continent.

The Virgin Smiles

Travelling was strenuous in the Sudan in the year 1905 and it was with great joy that the three White Sisters found themselves in their little hut of Dinguira, after the journey from Segou. Though Sister of the Annunciation had preceded them, she was not the only one to welcome them. Their first visit was to the Church and there above the altar, as gracious and beautiful as an apparition, her eyes filled with tenderness, Mary smiled down on them with joy.

The Fathers of the Holy Ghost, who had moved away from Dinguira, left their precious heritage, a statue of Our Lady of Mercy, to the White Fathers. This statue of a natural height, beautifully clothed and crowned with gold, holds in her hand a chain and a key, symbols of pity for the wretched captives. Upon entering the chapel, it immediately catches the eye.

Mary smiled on the Sisters. She smiles also on the Darkies, both young and old, and they all love her with an admiring and touching affection.

"Do you ever think of our Heavenly Father?" a Sister asked elderly Kamboula one day.

"Of our Heavenly Father, Mama? My spirit is always with Him."

"And the Blessed Virgin?"

"Oh Mama, the Blessed Virgin!" and from her expression she said more effectively than words could have—How could I ever forget so good and beautiful a Mother?

The devil hating to see the smile of the Blessed Virgin does all in his power to prevent it. Did he think he was the victor the night of June the first in 1910, when the storm unleashed its chains on the

banks of the Senegal? The claps of thunder roared in rapid succession and the wind blew in all its fury. A blinding flash of lightning pierced the church. In an instant the gale swept over the frame reducing the beams to splinters and crumbled the sheet iron as so many pieces of paper. Everyone ran to the middle of the ruins. The church looked as if it had been plundered by the most ruthless of vandals and yet, on the altar where all else was broken, the tabernacle remained intact and from on high Our Lady of Mercy still smiled down on her children.

The Virgin at Kakoulou

In 1913 Mary was moved to Kakoulou in the center of Kassonke because here she would be more centrally located and more could come to pray to her. The Sisters had the honor of placing the statue in their oratory.

The Children's Prayer

After the day's work is finished and twilight has fallen, the little children come to kneel at the feet of their Mother before closing their tired eyes on their little straw mats. The prayers being finished, they sing a hymn to a familiar Kassonke tune. Our Lady seems to be enchanted by the sweet young voices. Then suddenly little dark hands stretch toward her as if seeing an apparition.

"Mother, you can see us, you can hear us, we have come to salute you."

Yes she does see you, hear you, and she smiles down on you from Heaven. Tomorrow they will come again—and with the memory of this bit of Heaven, they fall asleep.

Silently Mary Conquers Souls

The young girls of Sabou-sire cross the river in canoes to come and ask a favor of the Sisters. They wish to learn the Christian religion and be baptized.

"If you are courageous and faithful, you shall be," they are told encouragingly and going to the chapel the eyes of the young Negro girls meet for the first time the blue eyes of Our Lady

of Mercy. In Kassonke, if you wish to honor some eminent personage, you sing their welcome and it was thus that Mary was welcomed into their hearts.

Then came a number of questions.

"What is the key for, that she is holding?"

"It is the key to Paradise and if you pray well, she will open to you the gate of Heaven."

Impressed some fall on their knees to pray. With childlike faith they fix their eyes on the Blessed Virgin's hand. But it does not move. They look at the Sister puzzled.

"It is not now that you will go to heaven," the Sister said smilingly, "but when you die. You do not wish to die yet, do you?"

"Oh no, but we would like to go to heaven."

"Pray often to the Blessed Virgin and you shall."

As they depart, they promise to do this.

The Desire for Mary

It is not enough to see her once, for having once seen her, you wish only to see her again.

On the 15th of August the women came from far for the Feast of the Assumption. Their hair was neatly braided and piled on the nape of their necks and their girdles had been freshly dampened with bark juice. They were ready for the Feast of Mariama Senoun'o. (Turn to Page 99)

White Sister training Native Sisters, in an Ophthalmic Clinic, in the Sudan.





Ordinary means of travel in the Sahara.

IN ETHIOPIA

ON DECEMBER 31st a caravan composed of the Very Reverend Father Devenish, C.S.Sp., Pro-Vicar for Europeans of Latin Rite, two Holy Ghost Fathers and five White Sisters left Nairobi in Kenya for Abdis-Abeda in Ethiopia. After nine days of motoring, they reached destination. Two more Sisters having missed the departure were to complete the Community at a later date. Two White Fathers have been in the Capital for some months already.

The welcome was not very heartening due to the political upheaval of recent years. Besides for centuries this land was torn by rebellion, persecution, schism and heresy. The missionaries earnestly beg for prayers in order to be able to do some good to these dear souls of Africans.

AT ADRAR

Some notes on a new foundation of the White Sisters.

The oasis of Adrar is the capital of Touat, an annex of the southern territory of Algeria in the Sahara (Dept. of Oran). Here are found some 40,000 inhabitants of which 6 to 7,000 are settled at Adrar.

The sedentary population is composed of Arabs and Harattines. The latter are a race apart, they have a mixture of white and negro blood. We meet them in all the oases of the south. They are farmers and also cultivate palm groves for the Arabs. By their complexion they resemble the Sudanese. They are of a Berber origin and speak "zenet". The Arabs are either traders or government officials, they form the bourgeoisie.

The Sisters left Algiers on the 12th of Jan-

THE MIS

uary to go to El-Golea. These 800 miles are familiar to a great number of White Sisters, but the road south in the direction of Adrar was as yet new. At In Salah there was a three days stop over because the desert car, expected there, had broken down.

The Sisters profited of the circumstance to get acquainted with the native inhabitants, who welcomed them warmly. These good

people had never seen Sisters, and insisted they stay among them to teach their women and girls to work. Here again is a well disposed population who must wait because "THE LABORERS ARE TOO FEW."

Adrar was reached only on the 23rd, the name means rock, mountain.

The Sisters found a temporary shelter in the enclosure of the military Bordj until the Convent is finished. The authorities have been very kind to the Sisters. In order to insure a hearty welcome to them, the Capitain, chief of this annex, assembled all the notables of the region. In a talk with them, he explained who the White Sisters were, and the purpose of their coming to settle in the country.

From the first days the Sisters began to nurse the sick in the temporary infirmary for Natives, while waiting that the hospital be



MISSIONS MARCH ON

built. It is to be situated next to the Convent.

Besides the Natives are asking the Sisters to open schools, etc., for their children.

MENGALLET

St. Eugenie's Hospital at Beni-Mengallet, Atlas Mountains, has reached the *Golden Milestone*. Since the opening date January 23, 1894, 43,783 native patients have been hospitalised.

Children from
Southern Oases.

Religious and civic celebrations commemorated the foundation.

WEST AFRICA

The first native Dagari Priest was ordained April 29th. The mass conversion of a whole tribe inhabiting West Africa originated

ten years ago. After God, this movement is credited to the zeal of the Very Reverend R. McCoy, now Superior of the White Fathers in the United States.

The White Fathers are at Alexandria Bay, N. Y., and at 3500 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Maryland—just outside the limits of the District of Columbia.

UGANDA

The Native Seminary of Bukalasa has given to the African Church: 1 Bishop, 4 African White Fathers, and 101 Priests to the Secular Clergy. The Seminary receives the students from the Vicariates of Uganda and Masaka.

OBITUARY

Rev. J. Paas, W.F.

Brothers Biseuil, Salentin, Louis-Joseph, and Geliber of the White Fathers.

Right Reverend Msgr. Leon, Dubuque, Ia.

Rev. W. Dostal, Ft. Atkinson, Ia.

Sr. M. Florence, W.S., Kabgaye, Rwanda

Sr. M. du Val Beni, W.S., St. Charles, Algeria

Sr. M. Felicie, W.S., French Sudan

Sr. M. Catherine de Sienne, W.S., Toro, Uganda

Rev. Mother Margaret Mary, Superior General, Sisters of Mercy, Worcester, Mass.

Sr. M. Juliette, Sisters of St. Francis, Dubuque, Ia.

Mr. P. Herkels, Luxemburg, Ia.

Mr. Landolt, Dubuque, Ia.

Lt. Clark, Metuchen, N. J.

Mr. P. Rupert, Sioux City, Ia.

IN THANKSGIVING TO THE SACRED HEART
For a favor received with promise to publish.
Mrs. Leonard Monnat, Syracuse, New York.



Modern conveyance through the great Desert.

Acknowledgements

TO HELP SUPPORT A SISTER ON THE MISSION

Academy of Our Lady, Chicago, Ill.

RANSOMED PAGAN BABIES

Miss Lucille Strileckis, Waterbury, Conn.
Our Lady of Sorrows School, Hartford, Conn.
Holy Trinity School, Hartford, Conn.
St. Joseph's School, New Britain, Conn.
St. Augustine School, Hartford, Conn.
Rev. W. Racicot, Willimansett, Mass.
Mrs. I. Saskin, Jersey City, N. J.
Mrs. M. Forst, New Eulm, Minn.
Miss M. Hillenbrand, Wheeling, W. Va.
S/Sgt. and Mrs. L. J. Martel, Suncook, N. H.
Public School Children, Sacred Heart Parish,
Worcester, Mass.
First Communion Class, St. Bridget Parish,
Millbury, Mass.
Mrs. J. Greene, Carthage, N. Y.
St. Joseph Academy, No. Sydney, N. S.
Sacred Heart School, Worcester, Mass.
Courville Public School, Detroit, Mich.
SS Cyril and Methodius School, Joliet, Ill.
St. Charles School, Dover, N. H.
St. Scholastica Academy, Chicago, Ill.
Miss M. Koenigskecht, Fowler, Mich.
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Mrs. C. Neuboner, New Britain, Conn.
Sacred Heart School, Perkinsville, N. Y.
Our Lady of Sorrows School, Corona, N. Y.
Miss M. Matson, Chicago, Ill.
St. Joseph School, Reading, Pa.
Miss Franklyne Tuson, Worcester, Mass.

PROVIDED BREAD FOR THE ORPHANS

Miss K. Hauser, Lansing, Mich.
Miss M. M. Santori, New York, N. Y.

TO KEEP A SANCTUARY LAMP BURNING

Mr. P. Ryznar, Binghamton, N. Y.
Miss M. Jakubowicz, Clinton, Mass.
Mrs. A. Toupin, Manchester, N. H.

TO SUPPORT A LEPER IN A HUT

Mrs. G. Yale, Winter Park, Fla.
Courville Public School, Detroit, Mich.

HELP

Help the Missions with your V-Mail—save the envelope and photographic copy (in good shape, not torn nor folded), Prisoner of War Mail—special cards or folded letters, A.P.O. Mail—please save the whole envelope (in good condition) stampless or with the air mail stamp.

Kindly send them in when you have a small accumulation to:

WHITE SISTERS CONVENT
319 Middlesex Avenue
Metuchen, New Jersey

Suffer Little Children

A White Father tells this story of a child of four and a half.

Meeting her one day, he said "Good morning."
"But Father, what is the use of wishing me 'good morning' when you do not love me?"

"Indeed," answered Father, "and what makes you think I do not love you?"

"You surely do not," came the reply, "because every morning you pass me over at Holy Communion, yet you give the Sacred Host to everyone else."

"My dear child, how can I give you the Sacred Host when you do not even know what it is?"

Quickly the tiny tot made reply: — "O but I do know. It is Jesus, Son of God, made man for us!"

Father was taken aback with surprise, but managed to answer: "Besides that, to receive Holy Communion, you must be very, very good and know how to go to Confession. Since you know that Jesus is in the Host, you must also know what it means to sin and to be repentant."

"Indeed, indeed, I know all that. I know how to go to Confession, for my mother told me, and she scolds me when I am not good."

"And you wish very much to receive Jesus into your heart, do you?"

"Yes, Yes!" cried the little girl, with eager happiness, "I want Him very much!"

Hereupon the Missionary, who was touched and yet delighted, answered: "Well! Well! Tomorrow I will hear your Confession, and then you may receive Jesus in the Sacred Host."

What a charming gesture! "... For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

For eight consecutive days two earnest children came to Catechism. At the end of that week they stood once more in front of Sister, quite confident of success this time:

"We want to make our First Communion," they cried.

"But I've already told you, you are far too young."
"O Sister," urged the children eagerly, "We've grown a lot since then, and we've learnt heaps."

Needless to say they were not made to wait any longer for their first reception of the Divine Child whom they loved so much and Who, in His turn, longs to dwell in innocent hearts that desire His presence.

Two sturdy youngsters appeared before Sister. "We want to make our 1st Communion, Sister."

"But you are much too small! You must wait a little while and learn your Catechism."

Put out, but by no means discouraged, the two tinies ran off without another word, though their faces spoke their deep disappointment.

The Virgin Who Weeps and Who Smiles

[Continued from page 95]

While the High Mass unfolded with all the splendors of the liturgy, the candle light played with the gold of the vestments. And now that it was finished, the crowd dispersed. The women gathered together but there was a cloud of sadness hovering over them. What could be missing on this beautiful feast day?

What is missing? They have come to celebrate the Feast Day of Mariama Senoun'o and since this morning they have been praying to her but as yet they have not seen her. To do this they must first ask permission from the Sisters to enter the chapel. With determination they are on their way.

Kneeling before the statue, they are lost in contemplation. They find her so beautiful, they cannot take their eyes off her expressive face and smiling lips. They decide to return every Sunday.

Knowing Her, They Wish Others to Know Her Also

Having once seen her, they are not content to keep her to themselves but announce to every one the praises of a Mother who is so condescendingly good.

It suffices to love to be an apostle and old Samba loves Mary with his whole heart. Was it not she who brought him to Our Lord? In his village you will hear him telling others, "When you go over there, you will see the Virgin and you will repent of having sinned."

One time, he succeeded in converting an old pagan and bringing his conquest, they prayed together at her feet.

Feli Gueta had a visitor from a distant village and, because she did not yet know Mariama Senoun'o, she brought her to the Sisters to see the statue.

"Look," she said to her friend when they were in front of the Virgin, "She is the most holy of all women of Kakaulou. We often come to visit her."

"Can she sit down?" asked the stranger.

"No, she always stands, but see how she looks at you? One would think she was going to speak. She is always like

this. Sometimes she smiles but other times she is sad and cries."

The Virgin Sometimes Cries

The sweet smile of the Virgin is consoling and encouraging and it tells of her joy to be among her children, but other times she is sad to tears. Even little children will verify it.

Four year old Sega comes to catechism with her little companions every day. Today she came early and is alone before the statue praying in her own childish way. The time passed and her companions did not arrive.

"In a little while they will come," Sister tells her.

"But the Blessed Virgin is crying, come and see," Sega sadly sobbed.

At last catechism begins. As we all know, at five or six, children are not always good. It was then that Sega, pointing to the Blessed Virgin, said to them, "Look, you have made her cry." And not wishing to do that, they kept their eyes on the statue—so that she would teach them to be good.

Mary Hears Their Prayers

Who would be able to tell of the miseries that have been lessened, the sufferings that have been soothed, the hearts that have been comforted by the compassionate goodness of the Blessed Virgin. The naive faith of the Negroes serves to veil her gifts for they keep their conversations with her secret. To them it is perfectly natural for a mother to answer her children, and even when they carry the weight of many years and their kinky hair has turned to silver, the Negro still remains a child. This childlike confidence permits us to guess the attitude Mary has toward them. Is it not this candor itself that stirs the heart of the Virgin?

It is cold in the early morning in November but every morning Samba shyly steals out of his cabin.

"Where are you going, Samba?"

"I am going to greet my Grandmother," he explains. "She is the Mother of Jesus

(Please turn the page)



\$5 Ransoms
A Pagan Baby

The Virgin Who Weeps and Who Smiles

(Concluded)

who is my Father," and Samba points his finger towards the Mission Church. His fervor will not permit him to wait for the rising of the sun. Samba has a good many burdens to carry and like a child he goes to his good Mama in Heaven to tell her all his troubles.

"When you talk to Mary does she answer you?"

"She tells me, be patient, wait a while and it will pass."

Tonight Samba did not return to his cabin. From the tabernacle Jesus seemed to say, "Can you not watch one hour with me?" So Samba stayed all night close to his good Friend as he had done many a night before.

Then Jesus told him, "Sleep now and rest a while." So Samba, not wanting to sleep in front of the tabernacle, went out and laid down close to the door. When the church bells rang for Mass awakening Samba, he resumed his guard.

After Mass kneeling close to the statue, Samba said, "Mother, I have come to see you but I am hungry. Since yesterday I have had nothing to eat, a mother always has something to give her hungry child. I know you can satisfy my hunger for you are the Mother of all mankind and are able to feed the whole world." Samba contemplated the Virgin for a while, then retired.

"What did Mary answer you, Samba?"

"She told me to be patient for a while and she would tell the people of the village to give me some food."

He left without a shadow of a doubt veiling his confidence and Mary, counting on his gratefulness, always fed her faithful servant.

How well Samba had understood the words of Our Savior, "See how the lilies of the field neither spin nor weave . . ." His simple faith, his candid prayer, his touching gratefulness are truly admirable.

Again this morning Samba is at the feet of Our Lady of Mercy, an old Samba in tatters is shivering in his rags.

"Mother does it honor you very much my coming to visit you in these torn clothes? If you do not give me any, I will steal yours."

"Do not be angry," she answered him, "I will give you some."

Now Samba has a brother in Dakar, a large and bustling city, where one may make a fortune but where one forgets his kin. The Virgin must have made him remember for this day the postman brought the old man a package containing a beautiful piece of material.

Samba was not surprised. He took it to the feet of Mary. "I came to thank you; it was you who caused it to be sent to me," he said simply.

The Holy Waters of Baptism flowed on the head of Samba; now he is Charles. He passed many more days and nights before the tabernacle at the feet of his heavenly Purveyor. The angels were aware of the mysterious conversations between the old man and the gentle Virgin. And then a day began for Charles when the colloquy without end began in Paradise.

There are no votive offerings near the humble but impressive image. No unnecessary noise is heard to mar this simple devotion of the Kassonkes for their Mother. The gift they offer is their hearts which they place at her feet telling her familiarly of their joys and pains, making this devotion to Mariama Senoun'o the center of their lives.

Far from the confused noises of the civilized world the Queen of Heaven holds her court in the middle of the cabins of this poor Negro village. Every night at the voice of the Catechist Edward, the little Kassonkes kneel at the feet of their Mother and with all their hearts they sing.

And Mary, who is sometimes sad to tears becomes radiant with a celestial light, and smiles at the little Negroes.

Sr. M. Paul, W.S.

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Reverend Mother Superior
White Sisters Convent
Metuchen, New Jersey.

WILL

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